

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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FM USDEL SECRETARY IN LEEDS
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DEPT FOR TARNOFF, LAKE AND CRAWFORD
DEPT PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR SCHECHTER AND POWELL

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)
SUBJECT: Q&A FOR PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE

(MIDDLE EAST)

1. FOLLOWING IS SUGGESTED QUESTION AND ANSWER ON
MIDDLE EAST APPROVED BY SECRETARY FOR PRESIDENT'S
THURSDAY PRESS CONFERENCE:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

Q. WHAT IS YOUR ASSESMENT OF THE STATE OF THE MIDDLE
EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS NOW?

A: THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAVE SEEN AN INTENSIFICATION OF
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL:

-- PRESIDENT SADAT MET WITH MINISTER WEIZMANN IN
AUSTRIA.

-- THE TALKS BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS KAMEL AND
DAYAN PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION
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OF THEIR APPROACHES TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.
OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO CONTINUE THIS NEW REOUND OF
EXCHANGES AND TO HELP BRING THEM TO A SUCCESSFUL
CONCLUSION. WE BELIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE IS SHARED BY
EGYPT AND ISRAEL. TIME IS PASSING, AND THE PARTIES
SHOULD NOT LOSE THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE.

-- FOLLOWING THE TALKS AT LEEDS CASTLE, THE PARTIES WILL BE REPORTING TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS, AND THE GOVERNMENTS WILL BE STUDYING THESE REPORTS.

-- WE ANTICIPATE THERE WILL BE FURTHER MEETINGS WHEN SECRETARY VANCE GOES TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

-- IN THE MEANTIME, AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS GOING TO THE MIDDLE EAST TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE PARTIES AND TO PARTICIPATE, AS THEY MIGHT FIND USEFUL, IN PREPARATIONS FOR FURTHER MEETINGS. SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE HAS BEEN MADE SINCE PRESIDENT SADAT BEGAN HIS TRIP TO ISRAEL LAST NOVEMBER, BUT NEGOTIATIONS HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE IMPORTANT DECISIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE IF PEACE AGREEMENTS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED. THERE ARE DIFFICULT ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED.

-- IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SO FAR A NUMBER OF COMMON ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. THESE CAN PROVIDE IMPORTANT PARTS OF AN AGREEMENT.

-- THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT WIDE DIFFERENCES REMAIN ON CENTRAL ISSUES. UNLESS THE GAPS CAN BE CLOSED ON THESE ISSUES, THERE WILL BE NO AGREEMENT.

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-- IT IS NOW INCREASINGLY NECESSARY TO INJECT PRECISION INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS SO THAT THE NECESSARY COMPROMISES CAN BE HAMMERED OUT.

IN THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' TALKS AT LEEDS CASTLE, THE TWO SIDES PROBED IN DETAIL EACH OTHER'S APPROACH TO THE WEST BANK/GAZA PROBLEM AND CLARIFIED FOR EACH OTHER THEIR RESPECTIVE PROPOSALS. SECRETARY VANCE REPORTS THAT THESE WERE THE MOST CANDID AND PROBING DISCUSSIONS HE HAS HEARD. IN ADDITION TO RECOGNIZING AREAS WHERE AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE, THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED AT LENGTH THE KEY AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT--PARTICULARLY THE QUESTIONS OF WITHDRAWAL, THE FINAL STATUS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND WHAT IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE SECURITY IN THESE AREAS.

AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WITH AMBASSADORS EILTS AND LEWIS WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE PARTIES IN AN EFFORT TO FIND WAYS OF DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES.
VANCE

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